



## **SPORTSMAN'S ASSOCIATION OF BASS ANGLERS**

# **MEGA BUCKS TOURNAMENT RULES and ELIGIBILITY**

**(Revised as of January - 2017)**

Sportsman's Association of Bass Anglers (S.A.B.A) expects strict adherence to the following rules by all contestants. In the event of an emergency, please call 911 first and then notify the tournament director. The tournament director should be notified as soon as possible prior to weigh-in if you use a mobile communication device for any purpose other than GPS, mapping, weather, power generation, tidal charts, personal fishing notes and related data as outlined in rule 8.

S.A.B.A. Tournaments are by invitation only. Eligibility is based on anglers who participated in 2016 with the following organizations;

- a. Became a member of S.A.B.A. and fished either the May or September 2016 S.A.B.A. Tournament or any prior year tournaments.
- b. Fished with Fishing w/Jim Austin Tournament Trail in 2016 or any of his prior tournaments.
- c. Fished with Fishing 4 Reel Tournament Trail in 2016 or any of F4R prior tournaments.
- d. Application for membership remains open to all individuals affiliated with a club or organization that in past years who have a verifiable history of having been a member of S.A.B.A.
- e. Full time tournament anglers or guides are not eligible to fish S.A.B.A. tournaments.

**NOTE: The above requirements must be verifiable.**

### **1. INTERPRETATION & ENFORCEMENT**

Interpretation and enforcement of these rules will be left exclusively to the tournament director. Decisions of the tournament director are final in all matters and are not subject to appeal. Each contestant agrees to report any rule violation to the tournament director immediately upon discovery of the violation. Failure to report violations may be cause for disqualification. The violation of a tournament rule may result in, but is not limited to, weight loss, the loss of weight up to a particular time in the tournament day, the loss of weight for the entire day, the loss of the heaviest one-day catch, the loss of the heaviest bass for the day, disqualification from the entire tournament or ineligibility to participate in future S.A.B.A. tournaments. Protests are to be made in writing within 30 minutes of the check-in time of the final flight of each tournament day.

## **2. PAYBACK & PARTICIPATION**

Payback is based on the number of paid entries for each tournament. Participation is open only to members of S.A.B.A. who are 16 years of age or older. Any person under the age of 18 (19 in Alabama) entering a tournament must also have the signature of a parent or legal guardian in the provided space on the entry form. Any person's participation in any tournament is at the sole discretion of S.A.B.A. officials. All contestants must have a valid fishing license for the waters they fish. Random checks will be conducted at each tournament. Failure to provide proof of a valid fishing license within a reasonable amount of time when requested by the tournament director will result in disqualification for that day and any preceding days in which the license was required for the tournament.

## **3. PURCHASING OF INFORMATION**

The purchasing of, or bartering for, information about locating or catching fish on tournament waters, including but not limited to GPS waypoints (other than through commercially available sources) and the hiring of fishing guide services is not permitted after the entry deadline date or the start of the off-limits period. The sharing of tournament winnings with none contestants in exchange for information about locating or catching fish on tournament waters is strictly prohibited and will be cause for disqualification from the entire tournament. The purchasing of, or bartering for, fishing locations from another contestant is strictly prohibited and will be cause for both contestants to be disqualified from the entire tournament.

## **4. OFF-LIMITS, PRACTICE & COMPETITION**

Off limits periods will be 14 days prior to the first official practice day as established by the tournament director and published in tournament invitation literature. Contestants may not enter tournament waters to locate bass or potential fishing waters or sightsee after the start of the off-limits period except during tournament hours. Testing equipment on tournament waters after the start of the tournament is permitted only with prior approval from the tournament director. Once competition is under way, contestants may not solicit and/or receive information about locating or catching fish on tournament waters from anyone except other participants participating in the tournament and through publicly available sources (quasi-public websites, blogs and/or social media pages, including but not limited to Facebook, Instagram and Periscope, set up for the specific purpose of sharing information with individuals or a small group of individuals are not publicly available sources). During competition days, contestants may not place brush or other physical fish attractors, including chum of any kind, in tournament waters. During competition days, boaters may not follow a none contestant's boat or participate in the placing of markers, brush or other fish attractors by none contestants or the practice of "hole sitting" by anyone.

During the off-limits period, no contestant may be on tournament waters unless prior approval is received from the tournament director. No person may be on tournament waters to locate fish or gain fishing information on a contestant's behalf. After the off-limits period, contestants may practice alone, with his or her registered partner, an immediate family member (mother, father, brother, sister, son, daughter, grandparent, grandchild or spouse), or with another contestant or a representative that has been approved by the tournament director prior to entering the water for practice. At no time during practice or on tournament days shall a contestant consult with a none contestant on or off tournament waters. Flights over tournament waters, including drones, are not permitted beginning with the start of the off-limits period, extending through practice and competition days.

## **5. REGISTRATION & PRETOURNAMENT MEETING**

Each contestant must register in person at the designated site or send a person who is 16 years of age or older to represent them at the site. Every contestant or a representative must attend the pretournament meeting to record flights, takeoff time, check-in time, off-limits areas, size and creel limits, and any other relevant tournament rule information. Every contestant or a representative must also attend the draw immediately following the pretournament meeting to receive the contestant's boat number. It is mandatory that all contestants or their representatives attend the pretournament meeting.

## **6. SAFETY**

Safe boating must be observed always. Each contestant is required to wear a fastened U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device anytime the combustion engine is running from boat check until weigh-in each day of the tournament. All boats must be equipped with an emergency ignition-shutoff device that must be securely attached to the driver's body whenever the combustion engine is running. All persons must be seated and a driver must be behind the steering wheel in full control of the boat whenever it is on plane or the combustion engine is running and in gear. At the discretion of the tournament director, tournament days may be shortened, postponed or canceled due to unsafe weather or water conditions. Competitors may leave their boat and seek shelter in bad weather or when danger is eminent. They must, however, stay within sight of each other.

## **7. SPORTSMANSHIP**

All contestants are required to follow high standards of sportsmanship, courtesy, conservation, and to conduct themselves in a manner that will be a credit to themselves, to S.A.B.A. and S.A.B. A.'s sponsors, the sport of fishing and S.A.B. A.'s efforts to promote the sport. Conduct not complying with these standards includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Violation of, or failure to comply with, any of the rules for S.A.B.A.
- Consumption and/or possession of alcoholic beverages or any kind of mind-altering substance during tournament hours extending through the weigh-in procedure.
- Abuse of, or addiction to, mind-altering substances.
- Conviction of a felony within the past 36 months.
- Suspension/disqualification, probation or ban from any tournament or fishing organization.
- Any other words, conduct or actions reflecting unfavorably upon efforts to promote safety, sportsmanship, fair competition and compliance with tournament rules, or which fail to comply with the standards set forth in the first sentence of paragraph 7.

In case of any conduct not complying with the standards outlined above, S.A.B.A. shall have the right to refuse an application to compete, to deny a confirmed application to compete by returning the entry fee, to disqualify a contestant or impose any penalty outlined in the opening paragraph, paragraphs 1, and 7.

## **8. BOAT OPERATION**

Contestants may not use mobile communication devices, including but not limited to, cell phones, tablets, marine radios, walkie-talkies, CBs, etc., to communicate with anyone about locating or catching fish on tournament waters during tournament hours. Mobile communication devices may be used during tournament hours to communicate with

lockmasters about locking, to communicate with the tournament director or to communicate with S.A.B.A. editors or producers. Contestants may use smart phones and/or tablets during tournament hours for GPS, mapping, weather, power generation, tidal charts, personal fishing notes and related data. At no time during tournament hours may contestants read or discuss social media posts from other contestants. If a special circumstance arises that inhibits a contestant's ability to compete, the tournament director may allow the contestant to withdraw from competition and maintain the weight caught to that point.

## **9. BOAT & HORSEPOWER REGULATION**

All boats must be propeller-driven, a minimum of 16 feet in length and have a rear deck (with a seat if requested). All boats must be equipped with wheel steering; no other steering device will be permitted. No barges or similarly cumbersome craft will be permitted. Each boat must have all required U.S. Coast Guard safety equipment. Boats must contain a properly aerated live well space to maintain alive a limit catch. Maximum horsepower for all outboards used in tournament competition will be 250 horsepower, not to exceed the horsepower capacity set forth on the "Maximum Capacities" placard described below. Each boat must have a clearly legible "Maximum Capacities" (or comparably titled) placard that includes a maximum horsepower rating affixed to the boat by the manufacturer. The horsepower of the outboard engine must not exceed the maximum horsepower capacity specified on this placard or the 250-horsepower maximum set by S.A.B.A. By signing the entry form, contestants agree to submit their boat and/or motor to an inspection by S.A.B. A's personnel. Falsifying information on entry forms or altering the horsepower numbers on the motor or rating placard will be cause for disqualification from the tournament and may result in ineligibility to compete in future S.A.B.A. tournaments. Fishing platforms must be factory-installed equipment. No portable platforms may be used in tournament competition. Fuel may be carried only in factory-installed (built-in) fuel tanks. Any additional fuel used during the tournament day must be purchased from a retail facility open to the public and pumped through a hose with a nozzle. The use of generators, other than solar or wind-powered generators, is prohibited in contestant boats during tournament hours on all competition days.

## **10. PERMITTED FISHING METHODS**

Fishing is defined as having a lure attached to a line and a rod and reel with the rod in hand. All bass must be caught alive in a conventional sporting manner. All lures must adhere to state regulations. Only artificial lures may be used, except for pork trailers and biodegradable soft baits. Alabama rigs and similar umbrella-type rigs are not permitted. Only ONE fishing rod may be used at a time. Trolling as a method of fishing is strictly prohibited. Trolling is defined as operating the combustion engine to extend a cast or lengthen a retrieve. All bass caught while sight-fishing must be hooked inside the mouth.

## **11. PERMITTED FISHING LOCATIONS**

Contestants may fish anywhere on tournament waters available to the public and accessible by boat except areas posted or otherwise designated as "off-limits," "no boats," "keep out," "restricted," "no trespassing" or "no fishing" (or similar language or markings intended to restrict public access) by S.A.B.A., commercial property owners and/or local, state or federal officials, or within 50 yards of a contestant's boat that was first anchored. An anchored boat is a boat held in a stable position by a line attached to a weight or by a Power-Pole, Talon or similar shallow water anchor with the trolling motor in the up position. All fishing must be conducted from the boat. At no time, may a contestant leave the boat to land a fish or to make the boat more accessible to fishing waters. The cutting of trees, bushes and/or logs after the start of the pretournament meeting and/or the removal of official local, state or federal barricades at any time to make an area more accessible by boat is strictly prohibited and may result in disqualification from the tournament.

The use of cables, ropes, chains or any type of block and tackle system to maneuver a boat into fishing waters is strictly prohibited and will result in disqualification from the tournament. Contestants must leave and return to the check-in by boat. The boat must remain in the tournament waters during the tournament day. No tournament boat may be loaded on a trailer before the weigh-in except with the permission of the tournament director. In the event of equipment failure or emergency the tournament director must be notified as soon as it is safe to do so. There are then two permitted methods of returning to the check-in: (1) by both paired anglers remaining in their boat and being towed by water, or (2) with permission from the tournament director, by one or both paired anglers entering the boat of another tournament contestant. Under these two conditions both contestants' catches may be counted without a penalty (except for late penalties, dead-fish penalties or other penalties pertaining to other tournament rules) if the contestant's fish are adequately marked so as to provide clear distinction of each angler's catch to the tournament director. Contestants who elect to return to the check-in by any other means than cited above will forfeit their day's catch to that point in time of the tournament day. Abandoning a boat and leaving it adrift without proper tie-off or anchoring after a mechanical failure may result in disqualification of that day's weight. Any contestant returning to the check-in point will be eligible to restart and resume competition under the supervision of the tournament director or his designated tournament official. It is the sole responsibility of contestants to locate the tournament director to request a restart. The momentary condition of being out of sight of each other for restroom breaks is permitted.

## **12. CHECKPOINTS**

There will be only one checkpoint for boat check in the morning and one check-in point in the afternoon. Failure to go through boat check and checkout in the morning or failure to check in at the check-in point will result in disqualification. All fishing must cease upon check-in.

## **13. LATE PENALTY**

Contestants who are not at the check-in area at the appointed time will be penalized 1 pound per minute, deducted from the total weight, including any weight to be counted toward the Big Bass Award. Any contestant more than 15 minutes late will lose credit for that day's weight.

## **14. LIVE FISH**

Every effort must be made to keep bass alive using a properly aerated live well. Two ounces will be deducted from the total weight for each dead bass presented for weigh-in.

## **15. SCORING**

Scoring is determined by the pounds and ounces of each contestant's catch during each tournament. Only largemouth, spotted, redeye or smallmouth bass are accepted species. No regurgitated forage or other foreign matter may be placed in a bass. The daily limit will be five unless the state or lake limit is less than five, in which case the state or lake limit will prevail. Participants possessing more than the tournament limit must notify the tournament director immediately upon discovery of the infraction and reduce his/her catch to the tournament limit by releasing live bass. Anglers possessing more than the tournament limit will be penalized 1 pounds for each bass over the limit. The minimum length limit for bass will be 12 inches unless the state or lake limit is more than 12 inches, in which case, the state or lake limit will prevail. Bass presented for weigh-in that fail to measure the prescribed length limit will be penalized at the rate of 1 pound for each short bass presented. Each contestant's catch must be presented in an official weigh-in bag and verified

by the signature of the participant. Failure to have a verified participant signature may result in disqualification of that day's catch.

#### **16. TIES**

Ties on 1 day tournaments will be resolved by a team's heaviest fish, by total number of fish for the tournament, or by total number of live fish for the tournament. If a tie remains it will then be broken by lottery. On multiple day tournaments, the heaviest one-day catch for the tournament will break ties on day 2 of a tournament. If a tie remains, it will be broken first by total number of fish for the tournament, then by total number of live fish for the tournament, by day 1 standings, then by the heaviest fish for the tournament. If a tie remains it will then be broken by lottery.

#### **17. TRUTH VERIFICATION TEST**

Each contestant agrees to submit, by signature on the tournament entry form, to a polygraph or voice stress analysis examination and to abide by its conclusion. Failure to pass an examination will result in disqualification from the tournament. Truth verification tests will be used at S.A.B. A.'s sole discretion, and the determination of the meaning of the results will be made solely by S.A.B.A.

#### **18. INSURANCE**

Liability insurance with coverage in reasonable amounts is required of all boater contestants in S.A.B.A. tournaments. An electronic or hard copy of valid insurance documents should be available for inspection by the tournament director. Random inspection of these documents may be conducted by the tournament director.